

July 15, 2003

The Honorable Michael S. Baer
Secretary of the Senate
State Capitol
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Re: Senate Bill No. 997 by Senator Schedler
PUBLIC BUILDINGS/GROUNDS: Revises authority of commissioner of administration
to transfer or reallocate buildings or space.

Dear Mr. Baer:

Senate Bill No. 997 prohibits the transfer or reallocation of state owned or leased space without the prior approval of the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget. Present law grants the commissioner of administration the authority to allocate space in state owned and state leased facilities. The Division of Administration through the Office of Facility Planning and Control manages more than three million square feet in 21 state-owned buildings and well over five million square feet in 796 leases. Further, since January 1, 2003, 151 new leases, 105 lease amendments, and 47 option terms have been exercised. If effective, this bill would prohibit relocation of state agencies within state office buildings, assigning increased space to agencies in state office buildings, executing leases in response to increased mandates or amending existing leases, without the prior approval of the budget committee. This law would impose an undue administrative burden on the Division of Administration and could potentially overwhelm the affected legislative committee. Further, this could potentially require agencies to stay in any unsafe condition that may arise until the budget committee can take action. This bill makes government less responsive to the space needs of state agencies and could ultimately cost the state additional lease funds if the division is not allowed to move quickly to meet the reduced needs of state agencies by reducing the amount of space leased by the state or moving agencies from leased space into state owned space in state buildings. Further, the bill could unintentionally create delays meeting additional space requirements and adversely impact service delivery to the citizens.

For these reasons, I have vetoed Senate Bill No. 997 and am returning it to the Senate.

Sincerely,

M.J. "Mike" Foster, Jr.

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